

WANDERERS THROUGH AT LAST!

AFTER two years of going out at the first attempt, Wycombe Wanderers broke their duck in the FA Trophy on Saturday with a narrow but deserved victory at Barnet.

Away defeats at Ilford and Slough in the last two seasons brought bitter disappointment for the club and its followers. But the Blues can put all that behind them now as they go into the second round of a competition that took over from the old Amateur Cup in 1974.

Wycombe's prospects before the trip to Barnet were far from promising. They had taken only one point from two vital league matches and their performance the previous week did little to lift supporters' morale. Added to that they were facing a club unbeaten at home in the Southern League with a string of impressive results under their belts.

But from the start they took Barnet apart with a scintillating first half display that should have won the match for them after only 45 minutes. During that time Wycombe created at least half a dozen chances with some brilliant football — all the more brilliant considering the muddy pitch had been well sanded before the game.

Barnet supporters behind the Press box could hardly believe their eyes and continued to sing Wycombe's praises throughout the first half. It was not surprising, they were watching a masterly performance of precision football played at a pace the home side were clearly not used to.

So when half time arrived with Wanderers only the one goal up, Barnet must have been both relieved and wary of what was to come later — especially as the Blues were playing down the considerable slope.

Yet, as so often happens after a super first half, the dominant team could not repeat their earlier feats. In fact, Barnet came storming right back into the game and can count themselves a little unlucky not to have earned a replay.

ANXIETY

Overall, however, Wycombe just about took the honours with their marvellous first half display and had they taken just one of their chances after the break, they could have saved themselves some anxiety in the last few minutes.

Manager Ted Powell, who was determined to make changes after the Enfield draw, brought back John Maskell, Howard Kettleborough and Mick Hollifield and switched John Priestley and Peter Cruse from up front to midfield respectively. The changes had an immediate effect with Cruse having a fine game and Priestley revelling in the muddy midfield melees.

Once again Wycombe's back four played a major role in this success. Alan Phillips and Keith Mead were masterful for the umpteenth time while full backs Bob Davies and Paul Birdseye enjoyed themselves by joining many attacks.

By STUART EARP Barnet 0, Wycombe Wanderers 1

Barnet, without the injured Bob McNab, had a couple of early raids but Wanderers soon warmed to their task. Their first time passing linked midfield and forwards beautifully and exposed massive gaps in the home rearguard. Not only that, their back four looked suspect in the air.

RULED OUT

The situation was perfect for Howard Kettleborough. Leaping high, he set up countless raids with his flicks and nudges as well as being a constant menace inside the Barnet box. 'Keit's' it was who netted in the eighth minute with a fine header from Cruse's free kick, but referee Alan Turvey ruled out the score for pushing. Wanderers were unperturbed.

After Maskell had saved brilliantly from Ray Aggio, the Blues began to put Barnet on the rack. Delightful combination moves saw them power forward through the mud and it was no

surprise when they took the lead after 27 minutes with a near copy of the earlier disallowed effort. Ian Pearson's corner curled in menacingly and Kettleborough was given both time and space to ram home a great header.

Wanderers, a yard faster than the home side, should have had the game sewn up by half time as they encamped in the Barnet half. Pearson put Cruse through but he shot wide with only the 'keeper to beat and then Pearson had a header ruled out after the ball had crossed the bye-line.

Shortly before the interval Pearson broke between two defenders and saw his shot charged down by Woodend. Howard Kennedy's follow up was cleared off the line.

The question of whether Wycombe could maintain their form was soon answered. Barnet attacked from the re-start and John Fairbrother — their top goalscorer — turned in one shot that lodged between Maskell's body and the ground. That effort

gave the home side fresh hope and they went on to dominate the half. Wanderers never found their earlier style and concentrated in hitting long balls for breakaways.

Two miraculous Maskell saves kept the lead intact in the 59th minute. First he parried Aggio's left foot drive and then hurled himself in front of Gary Williams to block a certain goal.

But in the 65th minute Wycombe should have scored with a beautiful move that stretched almost the whole length of the field. Phillips found Pearson who put Kettleborough away. They exchanged passes and then Kettleborough spotted Cruse at the far side of the penalty area. The pass was perfect but Cruse lofted the ball over the top with, once again, only the 'keeper remaining.

Mr Turvey, fast becoming famous for his insistence on the four step rule for goalkeepers, pulled up Woodend on one occa-

sion as he had done Ray Clemence in the Arsenal-Liverpool game earlier this season. Pearson's free kick was struck straight at the 'keeper, John Maskell, incidentally, had taken the precaution to discuss Mr Turvey's interpretation of the four step rule before the game.

Both sides exchanged corners as the match neared the close and Fairbrother was booked for dissent in the 81st minute. Barnet pressed on hoping for a late reprieve and Fairbrother twice went close before Wanderers heard the sweet sound of the whistle that confirmed they were through.

BARNET: W. Woodend; S. Oliver, M. Hinton, T. Topping, W. Lees, G. Williams, T. Price, D. Brown; R. Aggio, J. Fairbrother, M. Tucker (sub B. Bolton 60 mins.).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies, H. Kennedy, J. Priestley, M. Hollifield, I. Pearson, H. Kettleborough, P. Cruse. Sub A. Horsman (not used).

Referee: A. Turvey.
Half-time: 0-1. **Goalscorer:** Wycombe — Kettleborough (27).
Attendance: 1,581.

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